

# crash course russian history

crash course russian history offers a concise yet thorough overview of the vast and complex past of one of the world's largest and most influential countries. From the early formation of the Kievan Rus to the rise and fall of the Soviet Union, this article covers key moments, figures, and movements that have shaped Russia. Understanding Russian history is essential for grasping its current political landscape, cultural identity, and global impact. This crash course delves into the medieval period, imperial expansion, revolutionary upheavals, and the modern era. Readers will gain insights into the pivotal events and ideologies that define Russia's unique historical trajectory. The article is structured to guide readers through a chronological journey enriched with significant themes and developments in Russian history.

- Early Foundations and Kievan Rus
- The Rise of the Russian Empire
- The Imperial Era and Social Transformations
- The Russian Revolution and Soviet Union
- Modern Russia and Post-Soviet Developments

## Early Foundations and Kievan Rus

The origins of Russian history trace back to the formation of the Kievan Rus in the 9th century, a federation of Slavic tribes under the rule of Varangian princes. This early state laid the foundation for Russian culture, language, and Orthodox Christianity. The adoption of Christianity in 988 under Prince

Vladimir the Great marked a significant turning point, influencing art, law, and governance. Kievan Rus was a flourishing center for trade and culture, connecting the Byzantine Empire and Northern Europe.

## **The Varangians and Slavic Tribes**

The Varangians, often identified as Vikings from Scandinavia, played a central role in establishing the political structures of the early Rus. They united various East Slavic tribes, creating a loose federation that would evolve over centuries. This period was characterized by frequent conflicts, trade expansion, and cultural exchanges with neighboring peoples.

## **Christianization and Cultural Development**

The Christianization of Kievan Rus in 988 introduced Byzantine religious practices and literacy, which fostered the growth of religious institutions and the development of Old Church Slavonic as a liturgical language. This spiritual and cultural shift deeply influenced Russian identity and statecraft for generations.

## **The Rise of the Russian Empire**

Following the decline of Kievan Rus due to Mongol invasions in the 13th century, the Grand Duchy of Moscow emerged as the dominant power by the late 15th century. Moscow's rulers gradually consolidated control over surrounding territories, laying the groundwork for the Russian Empire. Ivan III, known as Ivan the Great, ended Mongol dominance and expanded Moscow's influence, while his grandson Ivan IV, or Ivan the Terrible, was the first to be crowned tsar, centralizing power and expanding Russian borders.

## **The Mongol Yoke and Its Impact**

The Mongol invasion in the 13th century imposed a period of rule known as the "Mongol Yoke," which

lasted for over two centuries. This era significantly influenced Russian political structures, military tactics, and economic practices. Despite devastation, the period fostered resilience and administrative centralization under Moscow's leadership.

## **Ivan the Terrible and Autocracy**

Ivan IV's reign was marked by significant reforms, territorial expansion, and ruthless suppression of opposition. He established the oprichnina, a state policy that created a separate territory under his direct control and a secret police force to enforce his policies. Ivan's rule set the precedent for autocratic governance in Russia.

## **The Imperial Era and Social Transformations**

The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed Russia's transformation into a major imperial power. Peter the Great's modernization efforts aimed to westernize Russian society, government, and military. Catherine the Great continued expansionist policies, extending Russian territory across Europe and Asia. This period also saw significant social changes, including the entrenchment of serfdom and the gradual rise of reform movements.

## **Peter the Great and Westernization**

Peter the Great's reign (1682–1725) introduced sweeping reforms to modernize Russia along European lines. He reorganized the government, built a powerful navy, and founded St. Petersburg as a "window to Europe." His efforts accelerated Russia's integration into European political and cultural spheres.

## **Serfdom and Social Hierarchies**

Despite modernization, serfdom became deeply entrenched during the imperial era, binding millions of

peasants to the land and landowners. This rigid social structure contributed to widespread inequality and unrest, setting the stage for future revolutionary movements.

## **Expansion and Military Campaigns**

Russia expanded its borders dramatically during this era, engaging in wars with the Ottoman Empire, Sweden, and Persia, among others. The empire's vast size and diverse populations presented ongoing governance challenges and fueled nationalist sentiments.

## **The Russian Revolution and Soviet Union**

The early 20th century was a period of dramatic upheaval in Russian history. The 1917 revolutions dismantled the centuries-old tsarist regime and led to the establishment of the Soviet Union, the world's first communist state. This era was defined by radical social, political, and economic transformations, including rapid industrialization, collectivization, and intense ideological conflicts.

### **The 1917 Revolutions**

The February Revolution forced Tsar Nicholas II to abdicate, ending Romanov rule. The subsequent October Revolution, led by the Bolsheviks under Vladimir Lenin, overthrew the provisional government, ushering in communist rule. These events profoundly changed Russian society and governance.

### **Lenin and the Formation of the USSR**

Lenin's leadership established the Soviet Union in 1922, uniting multiple republics under a centralized communist government. His New Economic Policy introduced limited market reforms to stabilize the economy after civil war and revolution.

## **Stalin's Rule and Totalitarianism**

Joseph Stalin's tenure saw the consolidation of power through purges, forced collectivization, and rapid industrialization. His policies caused widespread suffering but transformed the Soviet Union into a global superpower by World War II.

## **Modern Russia and Post-Soviet Developments**

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the beginning of modern Russian history. The transition from communism to a market economy and democratic governance was challenging and marked by political instability, economic upheaval, and social change. Russia reasserted itself as a major player on the world stage under various leaders, navigating complex domestic and international issues.

## **The Collapse of the Soviet Union**

The Soviet Union's collapse was driven by economic stagnation, political reforms under Mikhail Gorbachev, and nationalist movements within republics. The end of the USSR resulted in the independence of 15 republics and the emergence of the Russian Federation.

## **Economic and Political Transition**

The 1990s were characterized by rapid privatization, economic crises, and political reforms aimed at establishing democracy. This period also witnessed the rise of new political elites and oligarchs, as well as significant social challenges.

## **Russia in the 21st Century**

Under leaders such as Vladimir Putin, Russia has pursued policies of political centralization, economic

stabilization, and increased assertiveness in international affairs. Contemporary Russia balances its Soviet legacy with efforts to modernize and engage with the global community.

## **Key Themes in Crash Course Russian History**

- The evolution of autocracy and governance
- The role of religion and culture in state formation
- Social stratification and reform movements
- Imperial expansion and national identity
- The impact of revolution and ideology
- Modernization and globalization challenges

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is 'Crash Course Russian History' about?**

Crash Course Russian History is an educational video series that provides an overview of the key events, figures, and themes in Russian history, from the early Kievan Rus period to modern times.

### **Who hosts the 'Crash Course Russian History' series?**

The series is hosted by John Green, a well-known educator and author, who presents the material in an engaging and accessible way.

## **How many episodes are in the 'Crash Course Russian History' series?**

The series typically consists of around 10 episodes, each focusing on different periods or aspects of Russian history.

## **What time periods does 'Crash Course Russian History' cover?**

It covers a wide range of time periods including the Kievan Rus, Mongol invasion, Tsarist Russia, the Russian Revolution, the Soviet era, and post-Soviet Russia.

## **Is 'Crash Course Russian History' suitable for beginners?**

Yes, it is designed for beginners and those new to Russian history, providing a concise and clear introduction to the subject.

## **Where can I watch 'Crash Course Russian History'?**

The series is available for free on YouTube on the CrashCourse channel and also on the CrashCourse website.

## **Does 'Crash Course Russian History' include information on Soviet history?**

Yes, it covers significant events and themes related to the Soviet Union, including the Russian Revolution, Stalin's rule, World War II, and the Cold War.

## **Are there any supplementary materials available for 'Crash Course Russian History'?**

Crash Course often provides transcripts, quizzes, and additional resources on their official website to complement the video series.

# How accurate is the historical information presented in 'Crash Course Russian History'?

The series is well-researched and strives for accuracy, although it simplifies complex topics for educational purposes and should be supplemented with more detailed sources for in-depth study.

## Additional Resources

### 1. *Russia: A History*

This comprehensive book explores the vast and complex history of Russia from its earliest days to the modern era. It covers key events, influential leaders, and cultural shifts that have shaped the nation. The narrative balances political, social, and economic perspectives, making it an essential read for understanding Russian history.

### 2. *The Romanovs: 1613-1918*

Focusing on the Romanov dynasty, this book traces the rise and fall of Russia's imperial family. It delves into the political intrigues, reforms, and revolutions that defined their rule. Readers gain insight into how the Romanovs influenced Russian society and how their legacy ended with the Bolshevik Revolution.

### 3. *Revolutionary Russia: 1891-1991*

This text provides an in-depth look at the revolutionary period in Russian history, covering the fall of the Tsarist regime, the Bolshevik takeover, and the Soviet era. It highlights the social and political upheavals that transformed Russia into a communist superpower. The book also examines the impact of these changes on everyday citizens.

### 4. *The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction*

A concise yet informative guide to the Soviet Union, this book outlines the origins, development, and collapse of the USSR. It offers a clear explanation of communist ideology and the mechanisms of Soviet governance. Ideal for readers seeking a quick but thorough overview of Soviet history.

### 5. *Lenin and the Russian Revolution*

This biography focuses on Vladimir Lenin's role in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of Soviet power. The book explores his political philosophy, leadership style, and the challenges he faced. It provides context for understanding the revolutionary transformation of Russia.

### 6. *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*

A detailed examination of Joseph Stalin's early years and rise to power within the Soviet Union. The book reveals the complexities of his personality and political strategies. It sets the stage for understanding the impact of his rule on Soviet history and global affairs.

### 7. *Russia and the Russians: A History*

This book offers a broad survey of Russian history, emphasizing the relationship between the Russian people and their state. It covers cultural, social, and political developments across centuries. The narrative is accessible and engaging, making it suitable for both students and casual readers.

### 8. *The Cold War and Russian History*

Exploring the Cold War era, this book examines Russia's role in the global conflict between the East and West. It discusses the ideological battle, nuclear arms race, and diplomatic tensions that defined the period. The book also reflects on the Cold War's lasting effects on Russian society.

### 9. *From Tsar to Soviets: Russia's Path to Revolution*

This book traces the critical years leading up to the Russian Revolution, focusing on the decline of the Tsarist regime and the rise of revolutionary movements. It analyzes social unrest, political reforms, and World War I's impact on Russia. The work provides a detailed context for the dramatic changes of 1917.

## **Crash Course Russian History**

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**crash course russian history: History of Russia in 100 Minutes** Tanel Vahisalu, 2017-03-12 History of Russia in 100 Minutes is a crash course for beginners. Here you will find the complete history summarized and retold in simple language with accurate dates, the most relevant names and essential concepts. After finishing the course, you will know: - The basic characteristics of Russian history in different epochs - The 54 most important rulers and 106 historical persons in Russian history - 126 key dates and events in Russian history - The basic terms and concepts of Russian history The text is accompanied by numerous online resources: - 20,000 pictures - 700 videos - 3,500 songs - 100 podcast episodes All that is available via the [smarthistories.com](http://smarthistories.com) website.

**crash course russian history: 36 Letters** Joan Sohn, 2011-01-01 Joan Sohn found her grandparents' 36 letters, tucked away for 65 years in a small brown paper bag. When she read them, her family's story came alive. Of course, there were missing pieces—many of them; and so she began a long labor of love, filling in the gaps. Thanks to those letters and Sohn's determination, we have that story? about people who left their homes for a new start and never returned. They reinvented themselves; they changed their citizenship, their language, their customs, and even their names. 36 Letters is about separation, personal struggle, and achievement. It's about people who landed at Ellis Island and made their way, somehow, to New York's Lower East Side, and then to Philadelphia, where they grew and multiplied and made remarkable contributions to the city's development. Accompanied by over 100 stunning photographs, maps and illustrations, and, of course, the letters.

**crash course russian history: AP® European History Crash Course, For the New 2020 Exam, Book + Online** Larry Krieger, Patti Harrold, 2020-03-03 For the New 2020 Exam! AP® European History Crash Course® A Higher Score in Less Time! At REA, we invented the quick-review study guide for AP® exams. A decade later, REA's Crash Course® remains the top choice for AP® students who want to make the most of their study time and earn a high score. Here's why more AP® teachers and students turn to REA's AP® European History Crash Course®: Targeted Review - Study Only What You Need to Know. REA's all-new 3rd edition addresses all the latest test revisions taking effect through 2020. Our Crash Course® is based on an in-depth analysis of the revised AP® European History course description outline and sample AP® test questions. We cover only the information tested on the exam, so you can make the most of your valuable study time. Expert Test-taking Strategies and Advice. Written by a veteran AP® European History teacher, the book gives you the topics and critical context that will matter most on exam day. Crash Course® relies on the author's extensive analysis of the test's structure and content. By following his advice, you can boost your score. Practice questions - a mini-test in the book, a full-length exam online. Are you ready for your exam? Try our focused practice set inside the book. Then go online to take our full-length practice exam. You'll get the benefits of timed testing, detailed answers, and automatic scoring that pinpoints your performance based on the official AP® exam topics - so you'll be confident on test day. When it's crucial crunch time and your Advanced Placement® exam is just around the corner, you need REA's Crash Course® for AP® European History! About the Author Larry Krieger earned his B.A. and M.A.T. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his M.A. from Wake Forest University. In a career spanning more than 40 years, Mr. Krieger has taught a variety of AP® subjects including U.S. History, World History, European History, U.S. Government, and Art History. His popular courses were renowned for their energetic presentations, commitment to scholarship, and success in helping students achieve high AP® exam scores. All of Mr. Krieger's students scored above a 3, with most students scoring a 4 or a 5. In 2004 and 2005, the College Board recognized Mr. Krieger as one of the nation's foremost AP® teachers. Mr. Krieger's success has extended far beyond the classroom. He conducts SAT® and AP® workshops around the country, and has spoken at numerous Social Studies conferences. In addition, he is the author of several widely used American History and World History textbooks, as well as REA's Crash Course® test preps for European History, U.S. History, U.S. Government & Politics, and Psychology.

**crash course russian history: Assignment Russia** Marvin Kalb, 2021-04-13 A personal

journey through some of the darkest moments of the cold war and the early days of television news Marvin Kalb, the award-winning journalist who has written extensively about the world he reported on during his long career, now turns his eye on the young man who became that journalist. Chosen by legendary broadcaster Edward R. Murrow to become one of what came to be known as the Murrow Boys, Kalb in this newest volume of his memoirs takes readers back to his first days as a journalist, and what also were the first days of broadcast news. Kalb captures the excitement of being present at the creation of a whole new way of bringing news immediately to the public. And what news. Cold War tensions were high between Eisenhower's America and Khrushchev's Soviet Union. Kalb is at the center, occupying a unique spot as a student of Russia tasked with explaining Moscow to Washington and the American public. He joins a cast of legendary figures along the way, from Murrow himself to Eric Severeid, Howard K. Smith, Richard Hottelet, Charles Kuralt, and Daniel Schorr among many others. He finds himself assigned as Moscow correspondent of CBS News just as the U2 incident the downing of a US spy plane over Russian territory is unfolding. As readers of his first volume, *The Year I Was Peter the Great*, will recall, being the right person, in the right place, at the right time found Kalb face to face with Khrushchev. Assignment Russia sees Kalb once again an eyewitness to history and a writer and analyst who has helped shape the first draft of that history. Kalb witnessed and interpreted many of the defining events of the Cold War. In Assignment Russia he ultimately finds himself assigned as Moscow correspondent for CBS News just as the U-2 incident the downing of a U.S. spy plane over Russian territory is unfolding. Kalb brings alive once again the tension that surrounded that event, and the reportorial skills deployed to illuminate it. Like *The Year I Was Peter the Great*, the first volume in a series of memoirs narrating his earlier life, Assignment Russia brings us Kalb once again as an eyewitness to history and a writer and analyst who has helped shape the first draft of that history.

**crash course russian history: History and Geopolitics** Andrzej Nowak, 2008

**crash course russian history: *The Futurist Files*** Iva Glisic, 2018-10-26 Futurism was Russia's first avant-garde movement. Gatecrashing the Russian public sphere in the early twentieth century, the movement called for the destruction of everything old, so that the past could not hinder the creation of a new, modern society. Over the next two decades, the protagonists of Russian Futurism pursued their goal of modernizing human experience through radical art. The success of this mission has long been the subject of scholarly debate. Critics have often characterized Russian Futurism as an expression of utopian daydreaming by young artists who were unrealistic in their visions of Soviet society and naïve in their comprehension of the Bolshevik political agenda. By tracing the political and ideological evolution of Russian Futurism between 1905 and 1930, Iva Glisic challenges this view, demonstrating that Futurism took a calculated and systematic approach to its contemporary socio-political reality. This approach ultimately allowed Russia's Futurists to devise a unique artistic practice that would later become an integral element of the distinctly Soviet cultural paradigm. Drawing upon a unique combination of archival materials and employing a theoretical framework inspired by the works of philosophers such as Lewis Mumford, Karl Mannheim, Ernst Bloch, Fred Polak, and Slavoj Žižek, *The Futurist Files* presents Futurists not as blinded idealists, but rather as active and judicious participants in the larger project of building a modern Soviet consciousness. This fascinating study ultimately stands as a reminder that while radical ideas are often dismissed as utopian, and impossible, they did—and can—have a critical role in driving social change. It will be of interest to art historians, cultural historians, and scholars and students of Russian history.

**crash course russian history: Russia: A History, New Edition** Gregory Freeze, 2002-03-28

Drawing on recently opened archival materials, leading American and European scholars provide an authoritative interpretation of Russian history and culture, ranging from the eighth century to the recent creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

**crash course russian history: *Beetle*** D.K.R. Crosswell, 2010-11-01 This biography recounts

one of the most significant yet unsung military careers of the twentieth century: "a major contribution to the history of World War II" (Foreign Affairs). General Walter Bedell Smith began his public service career of more than forty years at age sixteen, when he joined the Indiana National

Guard. His bulldog tenacity earned him an opportunity to work with General George C. Marshall in 1941, playing an essential role in formation of the Combined and Joint Chiefs of Staff. After his appointment as chief of staff to Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1942, Smith took a central part in planning the major Allied operations of World War II in Europe. Among his many duties, Smith negotiated the surrenders of the Italian and German armed forces in 1945. Smith's postwar career included service as the US ambassador to the Soviet Union, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and undersecretary of state. In Beetle, D. K. R. Crosswell offers the first full-length biography of the general, including insights into his close relationships with Marshall and Eisenhower. Meticulously researched and long overdue, Beetle sheds new light on Eisenhower as supreme commander, as well as the WWII campaigns in North Africa, Italy, and Europe.

**crash course russian history: The Angel of Grozny** Sne Seierstad, Åsne Seierstad, 2010-05-25 In the early hours of New Year's Eve 1994, Russian troops invaded Chechnya, plunging the country into a prolonged and bloody conflict. A foreign correspondent in Moscow at the time, Åsne Seierstad traveled regularly to Chechnya to report on the war, describing its effects on those trying to live their daily lives amidst violence. Over the course of a decade, she traveled in secret and under the constant threat of danger. In a broken and devastated society, Seierstad lived amongst the wounded and the lost. And she lived with the orphans of Grozny, those who will shape the country's future, asking the question: what happens to children who grow up surrounded by war and accustomed to violence?

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this exciting new edition, Ian Armour incorporates findings from new research into the nature and origins of nationalism and the attempts of supranational states to generate dynastic loyalties as well as concepts of empire. Armour's insightful guide to early Eastern Europe considers the important figures and governments, analyses the significant events and discusses the socio-economic and cultural developments that are crucial to a rounded understanding of the region in that era. Features of this new edition include: \* A fully updated and enlarged bibliography and notes \* Eight useful maps \* Updated content throughout the text A History of Eastern Europe 1740-1918 is the ideal textbook for students studying Eastern European history.

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**crash course russian history: A Traditionalist History of the Great War, Book III** Alexander Wolfheze, 2025-03-13 This third volume of the series A Traditionalist History of the Great War provides an in-depth reassessment of the events leading up to the outbreak of the First World War. It views the systemic failure of Great Power diplomacy as the result of an increasing existential incompatibility-and growing power imbalance-between the Modernity-aligned Triple Entente and the Tradition-aligned Germanic empires. The final breakdown of international diplomacy in 1914 was preceded by major crises and peripheral wars that shaped not only the alignment of the Great Powers, but also the mindset of their leaders, who found themselves facing historical forces beyond their control. This book reconstructs the crises and wars of the pre-war years, as well as the military calculations of July 1914, showing how they are consistent with an overall geopolitical trajectory that inexorably led to the final show-down between the forces of rising Modernity and waning Tradition.

**crash course russian history: The Church's Unholy War** Nicholas Denysenko, 2023-05-04 How did religion contribute to Russia's invasion of Ukraine? Heated disputes and alienation among Orthodox Christians in Ukraine and Russia contributed to Russian aggression in Crimea and Donbas in 2014, and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This book examines attempts from the early twentieth century to the present day to liberate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from Russian control. It explores the causes of bitter alienation, Russia's use of soft power to maintain control, the development of hate speech used to discriminate against independent-minded Ukrainians, and the transition from soft to hard power from 2014 to the present.

**crash course russian history: Saint-exupery** Stacy Schiff, 2011-07-27 From a master biographer, the life story of the daring French aviator who became one of the twentieth century's most beloved authors Antoine de Saint-Exupéry disappeared at age forty-four during a reconnaissance flight over southern France. At the time he was best known for a career of daring flights over the Sahara, the Pyrenees, and Patagonia and for his contributions to the science of aviation. But the solitary hours he spent above the earth in open cockpit airplanes gave birth to a more famous legacy, a series of enchanting, autobiographical novels and the classic story *The Little Prince*, still the most translated book in the French language. An impoverished aristocrat from one of France's oldest families, Saint-Exupéry moved at age twenty-seven to the western Sahara Desert, to live alone in a plank shack and manage the way station for the *Aéropostale*, the French mail service. His careers as a novelist and an aviator were born here, and his life once he returned to Europe was defined--with brilliant and catastrophic results--by the sense of isolated fascination and curiosity he developed in the desert. In this definitive biography, Pulitzer Prize winner Stacy Schiff reveals an intrepid and unconventional life that rivals the best adventure stories.

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**crash course russian history: History, Disrupted** Jason Steinhauer, 2021-12-07 The Internet has changed the past. Social media, Wikipedia, mobile networks, and the viral and visual nature of the Web have inundated the public sphere with historical information and misinformation, changing what we know about our history and History as a discipline. This is the first book to chronicle how and why it matters. Why does History matter at all? What role do history and the past play in our democracy? Our economy? Our understanding of ourselves? How do questions of history intersect with today's most pressing debates about technology; the role of the media; journalism; tribalism; education; identity politics; the future of government, civilization, and the planet? At the start of a new decade, in the midst of growing political division around the world, this information is critical to an engaged citizenry. As we collectively grapple with the effects of technology and its capacity to destabilize our societies, scholars, educators and the general public should be aware of how the Web and social media shape what we know about ourselves - and crucially, about our past.

**crash course russian history: Global Economy: Post-Crisis to Sustainable Development** Irakli Kovzanadze, 2018-05-08 Almost ten years have passed since the onset of the global economic crisis, but scientists, businesspeople, bankers, and politicians continue to argue about its causes and whether it could have been prevented. The anticrisis measures that were taken also remain in dispute, and if you ask ten different economists which direction the economy is going, you'll likely get ten different answers. Irakli Kovzanadze, a career banker and financier, examines the crisis, including its effects on the world's social and political development in this important book. He highlights the following: causes of the crisis, including a dangerous triad of deregulation, financial innovation, and the speculative nature of doing business anticrisis measures at the national, regional, and international levels measures for reforming rating agencies that occupy an exceptionally important place in the modern global economy. From the origins and development of the crisis in the United States of America and Europe, to its ultimate spread, and on to ways the crisis was overcome, this book is an essential resource for aspiring macroeconomists, geopoliticians, bankers, students, and business professionals.

**crash course russian history: Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance** Paul L. Gavrilyuk, 2014-02 This study offers a new interpretation of twentieth-century Russian Orthodox theology by engaging the work of Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), especially his program of a 'return to the Church Fathers'.

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